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APRIL 1991

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STATISTICAL REFERENCE IDX
CONGRESSIONAL INFO SER.
4520 E. WEST HIGHWAY
BETHESDA MD 20814-3319
89
********** 5-DIGIT 20814

Chilton's
AUTOMOTIVE MARKETING

APRIL ISSUE/VOLUME 20, NUMBER 4

Cover photo from the International Hot Rod Association

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ONE OF THE **CAPITAL CITIES/ABC PUBLISHING COMPANIES,**
Diversified Publishing Group,
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825 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10019

AUTOMOTIVE MARKETING - ISSN 0193-3264. Published 13 times a year by Chilton Co., Chilton Way, Radnor, PA 19089. Chilton Co. is a division of American Broadcasting Companies Inc., New York, NY. Subscription prices (payable in advance) in the United States and U.S. possessions, $38 a year; Canada, $72 a year; Foreign, $72 a year. Single copies $3.50 each when available, U.S. only. SECOND CLASS postage paid at Wayne, PA 19087 and additional mailing offices. Postmaster, send Form 3579 to AUTOMOTIVE MARKETING, POB 2075, Radnor, PA 19089. Canadian GST Registration Number is R125906743.

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PROFILES

Tie your store into racing and racing promotions, and the customers will come racing in—with money to spend in their hands.

by **Gail Krueger-Nicholson,**
Managing Editor

The commercial value of auto racing has never been greater," Leo Mehl, director of worldwide racing for Goodyear, said. "More and more companies are using racing to increase public awareness of their products and services."

Aftermarket suppliers—names you know like Kraco, Valvoline, PlastiKote, First Brands, Unelko, Octane Boost, Exxon, and Bosch —have always known how to get the most out of racing. They put their logo decals on any piece of race car or truck sheet metal or race team uniform available and back those logos with lots of promotional money.

The reason why is easy to see: racing delivers customers by selling product.

Race Attendance Increases

For sheer numbers of exposures of product, supplier, and retailer names, racing is hard top. Attendance at 15 major North American racing series increased by more than 800,000 spectators in 1990, surpassing the 12 million mark for the first time, according to statistics compiled by the Goodyear Tire Co., Akron, OH.

Goodyear publishes an annual racing report as a barometer of motor sports popularity. The attendance figures are compiled from official sanctioning body statistics and reports filed by Goodyear racing division field managers.

The 15 professional racing series monitored by Goodyear showed an overall increase of 843,057 or 7.5% over 1989. A record total of 12,046,193 fans attended 268 events in 1990, up from 11,203,136 for 271 events in 1989. Average event attendance rose 8.7%

Television, too, has taken an increased interest in racing. ESPN alone has increased racing coverage 162% since 1986 when it broadcast 92 races. ESPN televised 241 races in 1990, according to Goodyear figures. The major networks carry selected events—usually Indy-type cars—while cable networks like WTBS, TNN, SportsChannel American, and Univision continue to expand their coverage of all types of racing.

"The millions of promotional dollars being spent are reflected in, and to a large extent, are justified by the steady climb in race attendance," Mehl said.

And, perhaps most importantly for the aftermarket, those eager race fans have the same demographic profile as your most important customers, the DIYers. According to figures released by three major race sanctioning bodies—National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR), International Hot Rod Association (IHRA), and International Race of Champions (IROC)—race fans tend to be younger males with low-to-mid-range household incomes who maintain one or more vehicles. These are the same people the latest *Automotive Marketing Consumer Automotive Repair Study (CARS)* identifies as DIYers.

How Racing Brings Customers To You

Racing drives customers to your door in at least four ways:

- Fans find racing exciting, therefore the products used in racing are exciting. This allows the store that shows and

Major Auto Racing Series Attendance 1989-1990

The 15 professional racing series monitored by Goodyear, Akron, OH, in 1990 showed an overall increase of 843,057 or 75.% over 1989. A record total of 12,046,193 spectators attended 268 events in 1990, up from11,203,136 for 271 events in 1989. Average event attendance rose 8.7% to 44,948 in 1990 from 41,339 in 1989.

Race Type	1990 # Races	1990 Total Attendance	1989 # Races	1989 Total Attendance	1990-1989 Attendance Gain/(Loss)
NASCAR Winston Cup	29	3,336,675	29	3,127,130	209,545
CART Indy Cars & USAC Indy 500	16	2,616,115	15	2,281,050	335,065
NHRA Drag Cars	19	1,535,575	19	1,451,483	84,092
WOO Sprint Cars	66	1,171,100	65	1,082,500	88,600
SCCA Trans-Am Cars	15	1,128,475	14	835,100	293,375
NASCAR Grand National Stock Cars	31	913,800	29	718,700	189,100
IMSA GT Prototype Cars	15	855,200	15	839,500	15,700
IMSA GTO/GTU Cars	14	779,750	15	680,550	99,200
MTEG Stadium Off-Road Vehicles	10	386,826	9	346,467	40,364
ARCA Stock Cars	18	351,650	17	316,140	35,510
ACT Stock Cars	23	345,925	23	327,818	18,107
ASA Stock Cars	17	330,106	15	291,154	38,952
IHRA Drag Cars	8	309,628	7	245,378	64,250
NASCAR Modified Stock Cars	23	270,900	26	264,600	6,300
NASCAR Winston West Stock Cars	9	261,000	11	283,600	(22,600)
Totals	**268**	**12,046,193**	**271**	**11,293,136**	**843,057**

Source: Goodyear Corp., Akron, OH

sells those products to be exciting as well.

- Racing builds belief. No race driver or team uses junk products. Racing demonstrates excellence.
- Racing supports the brand concept. Want the added dollars which come from selling-premium-priced products?—racing is a way to sell those products.
- When racing is promoted, store traffic increases as race fans check out the race-related promotions.

And retailers can take advantage of racing in at least two ways:

- In-store tie-ins to race events
- Sponsorship of a car or event

Racing Tie-Ins

Store tie-ins to racing are inexpensive and simple. All you do is borrow the excitement that is already in the air at race time. Here are some ideas of how to do so:

- Display a complete calendar of *all* race events, both in your area and nationally.
- Feature the products your suppliers promote through racing. Put those products on displays that play up the supplier race tie-in and make the displays important.
- Gear your endcaps, dump displays, and window advertising to race-related products.
- Ask manufacturers who sponsor race events to supply you with posters, shelf headers and talkers, banners, flags—all the promotional material you can get hold of. And, make sure to use it.

Who's Who In Racing

Racing can seem like so much alphabet soup, with each sanctioning group operating under a set of initials. Here is what some of those letters mean:

ACT	American/ Canadian Tour
AIS	American Indy Car Series
ARCA	Automobile Racing Club Of America
ASA	American Speed Association
CART	Championship Auto Racing Teams
IHRA	International Hot Rod Association
IMSA	International Motorsports Association
IROC	International Race Of Champions
MTEG	Mickey Thompson Entertainment Group
NASCAR	National Association For Stock Car Auto Racing
NCRA	National Championship Racing Association
NHRA	National Hot Rod Association
PROS	Professional Racers Organization Series
RCCA	Race Car Club Of America
SCCA	Sports Car Club Of America
USAC	United States Auto Club
WOO	World Of Outlaws

- Get caps and decals from suppliers for your store personnel to wear and make sure they wear them.

Sponsorship

More direct involvement in racing usually means a sponsorship of some sort, either of cars, drivers, events, or race series. Such sponsorships extend and boost your advertising reach, increase store name awareness, and traffic.

Each of these possibilities usually includes co-sponsorships and associate sponsorships. Your level of involvement will be determined by the needs of the sponsored team and the size of your pocketbook.

While national sponsorship may be too expensive for all but national chains, regional sponsorships often offer great advertising possibilities for the dollar. Check with local tracks and association promotional people for information.

No matter what level of involvement you choose for your store, the benefits of racing promotions are hard to beat. ■